

King holds talks with German Chancellor on ties, Mideast issues

Berlin, May 13 (Petra) -- His Majesty King Abdullah II and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on Wednesday, held talks that focused on ways to develop German-Jordanian cooperation in various fields, in addition to the latest developments in the Middle East.

His Majesty commended ties between the two countries in various fields, referring to Germany's support and assistance to the Kingdom.

The talks, held over a lunch banquet hosted by Merkel in honor of His Majesty the King, touched on developments in the Middle East and efforts to address terrorism and achieve peace and stability.

In this context, His Majesty underlined the importance of adopting a comprehensive strategy to address all forms of terrorism and extremism.

With regard to the efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, the King reiterated the need to intensify efforts to set the ground to revive the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis and resume negotiations, based on the two-state solution and relevant terms of reference.

The talks dealt with crises in some Arab countries, including Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, and stressed the need to reach a comprehensive political solutions to reserve these countries' stability, territorial integrity and security.

The German Chancellor said her country is keen on cementing relations and expanding cooperation with the Kingdom in various fields.

She pointed out that Germany deems the Kingdom as a strategic partner especially in dealing with the current challenges in the Middle East and promoting security and stability in the region and the world.

Merkel commended as outstanding the role Jordan plays along with various parties and international powers, in addressing terrorism and extremist organizations.

In press remarks following the meeting, His Majesty said Jordan is keen to work with its partners in the European Union to overcome challenges facing the Middle East and push peace efforts forward.

He noted that Jordan and Germany have agreed to coordinate and unify their efforts to combating terrorist and extremist groups which have become a threat to the whole world.

"Extremist threats have never been as widespread as is the case today," King Abdullah said, naming the terrorist groups of Daesh, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab. "These dangers just cannot be approached in isolation," he said and called for stronger international cooperation.

Asked about a possible ground offensive against Daesh in Mosul and a possible contribution by Jordan, King Abdullah said the main focus would continue to be the region bordering Jordan.

He said: "In Iraq, we are the only Arab army that is working with the coalition inside of Iraq. At this stage it is the use of air force." "Depending on what the Iraqi and coalition objectives are over the coming summer and how that reflects on Daesh in our area of responsibility, would be where the Jordanian Armed Forces would have some sort of play," the King added.

King Abdullah also underlined the importance of reviving the Middle East peace process, and said the

Palestinian-Israeli issue is being used by extremists all over the world.

He also spoke about the major burdens being borne Jordan which hosts a massive influx of Syrian refugees on its territory. Responding to a question on Jordan's participation in Arab coalition in Yemen, the King said Jordan is part of the coalition whose priority now is to defend Saudi Arabia, adding that there is no procedure to join any ground intervention in Yemen.

The German Chancellor has also promised stronger support for Jordan amid a growing number of Syrian refugees seeking shelter in the country. "Jordan is carrying a very large burden as one of the consequences of Syrian civil war. We are trying to help from a humanitarian perspective," Merkel said.

She pointed out Germany had provided €850 million in aid to the countries in the region for the Syrian refugees and €230 million was allocated to Jordan.

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